

FIRST QUARTER 2022 MEETING OF THE NIGERIA INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL (NIREC) HELD AT REIZ CONTINENTAL HOTEL, ABUJA, FROM MARCH 27 TO 29, 2022

COMMUNIQUÉ

PREAMBLE

The Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), under the leadership of the Co-chairmen, His Eminence, the Sultan of Sokoto and President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, CFR, mni, and the President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), His Eminence, Rev. Dr. Samson Olasupo Ayokunle, held its First Quarter 2022 Meeting at Reiz Continental Hotel, Abuja, from the 27th to 29th of March, 2022. The theme of the meeting, which was declared open by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Mr. Boss Gida Mustapha, who was represented by the Permanent Secretary of the General Services Office, Dr Maurice Mbaeri, was "Education for Peace and Nation-building".

The opening ceremony was attended by senior representatives of governmental agencies, including the Honourable Minister of Labour and Productivity, Dr Chris Ngige, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), members of NIREC, the media and many other dignitaries.

Apart from the thought-provoking opening remarks of the Co-chairmen of NIREC and the Executive Secretary, two paper presentations were made by Prof. Afis A. Oladosu of the University of Ibadan and Fr Prof. Hyacinth Ichoku, Vice Chancellor, Veritas University of Nigeria, Abuja, on the theme of the meeting.

RESOLUTIONS

After extensive deliberations on the State of the Nation with respect to issues concerning education, peace and nation building, NIREC unequivocally:

1. **Emphasised** the critical role of education in human capacity development and nation building;
2. **Appealed** to all Nigerians, especially Muslims and Christians whose religions prioritise education, to confront the monsters of ignorance and illiteracy that breed terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, ritual killing and other vices ravaging the country by educating their children;

3. **Commended** the Federal Government on the responsiveness demonstrated in the rescue of Nigerians who were stranded in Ukraine;

4. **Noted** that the inability of the Federal Government and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) to resolve the lingering misunderstanding between them is detrimental to the achievements of the goals of education for peacebuilding;

5. **Urged** the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) to call off its ongoing strike so that the educational life of Nigerians can improve and the students can have sound and healthy minds that will steer them away from violence and anti-social behaviour;

6. **Stressed** that as God will question religious leaders for not speaking the truth, they should always condemn violence and criminals who spill innocent people's blood across the country;

7. **Emphasised** the need for Nigerians to revalidate their spirituality by being truly close to God because the rising cases of inhuman activities perpetrated by Nigerians, including teenagers, are not consistent with the religiosity of Nigerians;

8. **Charged** government at all levels to urgently address the widening gap between the rich and the poor in Nigeria so that the existential economic threat will be removed and Nigeria will be a happy, safe and secure place to live for all Nigerians;

9. **Condemned** the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and urged all parties involved in the conflict to give peace a chance because human life is sacred and the wanton destruction of life and livelihood is unjustifiable;

10. **Declared** as unacceptable the alleged invasion of the Kaduna Airport by bandits and hoodlums and urged all in authority to prevent such occurrence in the future;

11. **Insisted** that the security situation in Nigeria is worrisome and that the security agencies should triple their efforts in carrying out their constitutional roles of safeguarding the life and properties of Nigerians at all times;

12. **Called** on the stakeholders in government and petroleum industry to find a definite solution to the lingering problem of fuel scarcity and the sky-rocketing prices of goods and services in Nigeria which are making many people become increasingly impoverished and desperate;

13. **Reiterated** that Government take urgent measures to prevent recruitment of youth as political thugs while focusing on ensuring free, fair and peaceful elections, especially now that the election season is here;

14. **Demanded** that, given that the future of Nigeria depends on the education of Nigerians, the Federal Government practically addresses the problem of the out-of-school children and be more proactive in stemming the tide of insecurity in the country since the uneducated children of today are the criminals and bandits of tomorrow;

15. **Deplored** the obsession of many Nigerians with caring for themselves and their children only at the expense of the majority while encouraging Nigerians to care for others and others' children in order to achieve love and harmony that are crucial to nation building;

16. **Tasked** the Nigerian media on the imperative of observing media ethics and upholding the principles of truth, objectivity and fairness in their reportage as they shun sensational reportage that has the potential of overheating the polity; and

17. **Enjoined** all Nigerians regardless of political affiliations and religious persuasions to put the interest of Nigeria first and contribute their quota in nation building and peaceful development.

APPRECIATION

The Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) appreciated the immense support and contributions of the Federal Government under President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, towards the success of the meeting. The Council duly acknowledged the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Mr. Boss Gida Mustapha, for supporting NIREC in all its programmes. NIREC also thanked the Honourable Minister of Labour and Productivity, Dr Chris Ngige, for attending the meeting and updating NIREC on the efforts being made towards ending the disagreement between the Federal Government and ASUU.

NIREC is profoundly grateful to the Guest Speakers, Prof. Afis Oladosu of the University of Ibadan and Fr Prof. Hyacinth Ichoku of Veritas University of Nigeria, Abuja, for their presentations. The Council is equally grateful to all the dignitaries and participants who attended the opening session and thereby contributed to the success of the meeting.



His Eminence,
Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, CFR, mni
The Sultan of Sokoto/ President General,
Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and
Co-Chairman, NIREC)



His Eminence,
Rev. Dr. Samson O. A. Ayokunle
President, Christian Association of
Nigeria (CAN) and Co-Chairman, NIREC



Fr. Prof. Cornelius A. Omonokhua
Executive Secretary, NIREC